Nation

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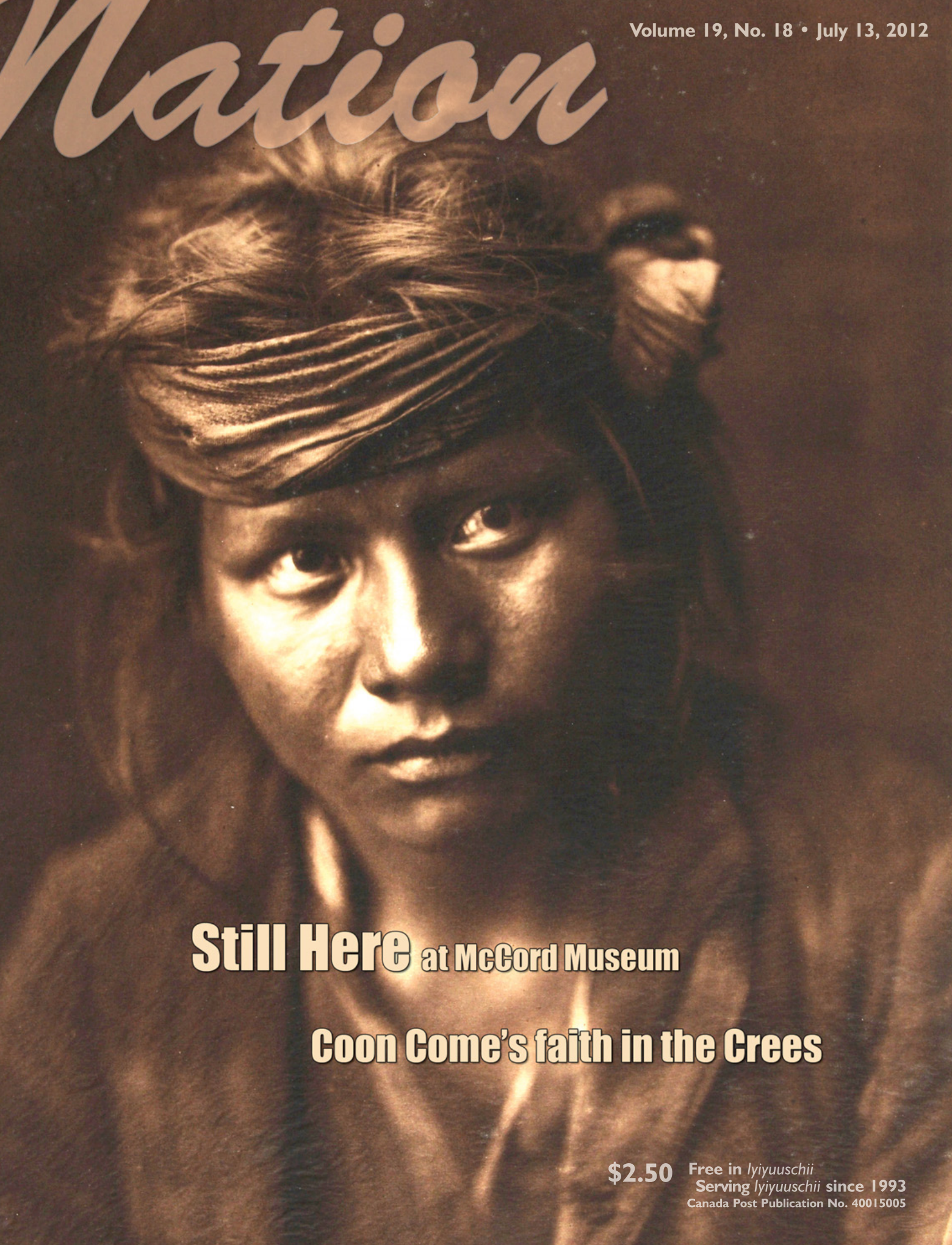

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Coon Come's faith in the Crees

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the Nation

I believe

By Will Nicholls

Global Television and Postmedia News had Ipsos Reid look at how the average Canadian views the relationship between the Canadian government and Aboriginal Peoples. It is no surprise the poll said that most Canadians believe Aboriginal Peoples are well treated. They even believe Aboriginal Peoples receive too much from the Canadian government.

I have no doubt that many Canadians believe that wholeheartedly. They have been told that myth time and time again. Each time any Canadian government spends any money concerning Canada's Aboriginal population a press release goes out to show how well they are treating Aboriginals.

It receives notice in the media while the United Nations' concerns over the disparity between mainstream and Aboriginals do not receive the same consideration. Press releases by Aboriginal Peoples, whether it be local or regional governments and organizations, are rarely seen in the media.

After all, we know no one likes to think of themselves, and by extension their government, as doing less than the right thing. Thus many Canadians believe that Aboriginal peoples are getting what they deserve and more from the government. The poll said two in three (66%) strongly or somewhat agree that "Aboriginal Peoples are treated well by the Canadian government". So in these days only a third of Canadians (34%) disagree that the Canadian government treats Aboriginal peoples well.

While any Aboriginal person may tell you different, it is obvious their side of the story is not being heard. Support for independent voices and viewpoints are at an all-time low in Canada. You merely have to look at the post-secondary student protests in Quebec to understand the depths of how Canadians feel. While the red square has gone worldwide in its support, at home draconian laws designed to suppress constitutionally protect rights have been enacted with widespread support.

It extends to Aboriginal Peoples as a majority of voters believe that Aboriginal peoples receive too much support from Canadian taxpayers. Nearly two in three (64%) agree that "Canada's Aboriginal peoples receive too much support from Canadian taxpayers". Almost four in 10 (36%), however, disagree (11% strongly / 26% somewhat) that Aboriginal peoples get too much for the government.

Of course, people in different regions across the country believe this to varying degrees. Quebecers (75%) and Albertans (73%) believe this in the highest numbers, followed by residents of British Columbia (69%), Atlantic Canada (65%), Ontario (60%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (54%). Canadians across the land believe Aboriginal Peoples receive too much support from Canadian taxpayers. The poll said that of people from: Alberta (79%), British Columbia (74%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (69%), Quebec (66%), Atlantic Canada (59%) and Ontario (55%).

Support for Aboriginal Peoples in every country seems to follow a cycle of ups and downs. This latest poll shows a downward trend in Canada that is one many Aboriginal peoples should be concerned with. Given the historical governmental actions and responses during these cycles it is something to worry about. That is what I believe and know to be true, based on the truth rather than just something spin doctored.

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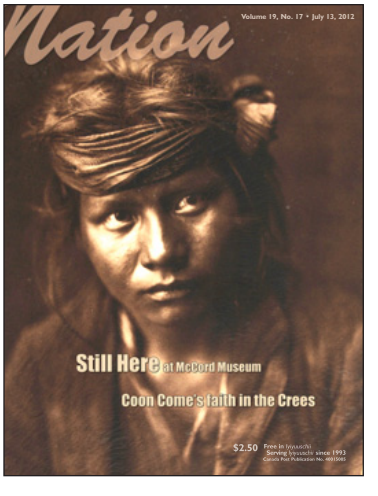

on the cover:
A Son of the Desert - Navaho, 1904
Edward Sherrif Curtis

The gambling man

By Sonny Orr

One of my first exposures to gambling involved a lot of risk and small stakes (little wooden stakes were inserted into the ground). A coin toss would ensue and the art of coin throwing was a simple yet elegant precision casting and being sure-footed helped a lot. The object was to get the coin in question as close to the little stick in the ground as possible, so coin tossing took a lot of practice. An uncle and distant cousin coaxed me into my first game, where my first bet was a paper dollar. Everyone snickered but my buck got caught on the stake and I was declared the winner-take-all game of chance and superb skill.

Later, the common jack was thrown in to spice up the game and eventually cards took over. Nearly every household has some game of cards going on throughout the night. The winner usually had some bills mixed with a lot of change, which would be recycled back in the next game, the night after Sunday. Fridays were always the all-nighters, with the losers patiently waiting it out until the winner was confirmed, usually just before sunrise. Such was the social life.

Usually, the game of chance was combined with the game of skill, such as pool. For many years, I often wondered what was happening underneath the Roman Catholic Church, until, one night, I entered into a smoke-filled room with snooker tables. The balls clicking sharply and the betting going on the bank of the table, the winner would double his reputation as a pool and gambling shark. So this is where all the older guys disappeared to, underneath the church. Who would have thought?

Then, in a social phenomenon, bingo showed up in large rooms everywhere. bingo nights were the place to be for nearly everyone, except babysitters and kids. Then, for some odd reason, bingo halls were in parish halls, or underneath the church building. Go figure.

Then, the electronic age took over and bingo was broadcast from tiny radio stations into the Arctic nights and gambling slowly crept into the home kitchen tables and soon it was everywhere. Now, bingo is firmly in our mindset as a social function. It is the only time where we happily agree to throw away money! Of course, justification kept the naysayers at bay with the profits going to fund other areas that need desperately money to get by, like helping with sports and recreation, emergency funds, slush funds, social-aid funds, social-service funds, and social band-aid funds – you name it, gambling funded it.

Then state-run lotteries eventually crept into the social evening scene at local bars everywhere. Now, all addiction could be fed just around the corner.

I may sound like a naysayer, but there is one thing I learnt in mathematics about gambling. What is won, commissioned, and lost at any game of chance is the same amount of money that was put in the first place. So where are the profits? Perhaps mainly for the house, which usually wins anyways. If there were more winners than losers, gambling would be a money-losing business (for the house).

Kaching!!

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EDITOR IN CHIEF
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IYIYUU AYIMUUN EDITOR
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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
M. Siberok, B. Judd, M. Della Posta
D. Coyle, S. Orr, A. German, A. Levitas,
J. Staniforth, X. Kataquapit,

PHOTOGRAPHY
A. German, N. Diamond,
W. Nicholls, D. Valade

DIRECTOR OF FINANCES
Linda Ludwick

SALES REPRESENTATIVES
Danielle Valade, Ginette Grégoire

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
K. Larocque

DESIGN AND LAYOUT
R. Lawson

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WHERE TO REACH US:
POSTMASTER:
The Nation PRODUCTION OFFICE
4529 CLARK, #403
MONTREAL, QC., H2T 2T3
EDITORIAL & ADS
TEL.: 514-272-3077, FAX: 514-278-9914
The Nation HEAD OFFICE
P.O. BOX 151, CHISASIBI, QC. J0M 1E0
www.nationnews.ca
E-MAIL ADDRESSES:
Editorial: nation@beesum-communications.com
news@beesum-communications.com
Ads: for Danielle Valade
ads@beesum-communications.com
for Ginette Gregoire
publicity@beesum-communications.com
Classifieds: Séri Jacobs-Pepin
sjacobs@beesum-communications.com

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"THE MESSAGE FROM THE SPEAKERS WAS NEVER TO GIVE UP, FOR THE STUDENTS NOT TO GIVE UP THEIR DREAMS. WE KNOW THAT SHANNEN WAS THERE IN SPIRIT, WITH US. IT WAS AN UNFORGETTABLE MOMENT IN REMEMBERING SHANNEN."

Breaking ground for new school

Attawapiskat residents hope the ceremony is a sign of changing times

By Brandon Judd

After years of wrangling and broken promises, residents of Attawapiskat gathered in glee on June 22 to watch the groundbreaking for their long overdue school.

Dozens of residents stood, cheering or weeping, thank you signs dotting the crowd. The biggest honoree, mentioned in all speeches, was Shannen Koostachin, the student who, at 13, spearheaded the campaign to bring a school to the long-waiting community, before tragically dying at 15 in a car accident two years ago. The groundbreaking ceremony for the school coincided with the day Shannen would have graduated.

"The message from the speakers was never to give up, for the students not to give up their dreams," said Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence. "We know that Shannen was there in spirit, with us. It was an unforgettable moment in remembering Shannen. "

The community became the centre of a news firestorm last year when sewage blockages drove many residents into homelessness. But long before that, Attawapiskat was, for critics, an ideal example of negligent treatment of the Aboriginal community. In 2000, the school shut down after parents took their kids out of a school that was built on the contaminated site of a 30-year-old diesel-fuel spill, a problem that was receiving no attention from the government.

"Attawapiskat is a symbol of the complete negligence that First Nations have been exposed to under the federal government, both this government and the Liberal one before it," said Charlie Angus, the NDP MP representing the area. "[The gas leak] would be illegal anywhere in Canada, you never expose kids to these kinds of cancer-causing substances."

After the school closed, Attawapiskat residents lobbied repeatedly for a replacement, and believed they had succeeded when, in 2007, the Ministry of Indian Affairs promised funding, only to revoke it, according to the community. The issue got international exposure after Koostachin started a grassroots campaign that became, according to the United Nations, the largest youth-driven human rights movement in Canadian history.

"She played such a big role to get the message out across the country, and getting everyone to understand what we're going through when there's no school in a small community, what kids have to go through with no school," Spence explained. "Shannen's passion was crucial, and she was led by her classmates, community leaders and family. She played a role we'll never forget, and one we'll honour for a lifetime. She was there for our community."

Angus, meanwhile, cautioned that while the elation surrounding this event should be enjoyed, the issue is systemic and ubiquitous.

"We get a good news story now, but the reality is until we close the funding gap and get proper funding for other schools, other Attawapiskats will continue to happen," he said. "It was an extremely emotional day for these children. Seeing their excitement and their sense of the future was moving. But it made me think about all the other kids across the country who are still being neglected."

Spence agreed, stressing the importance of grassroots movements in other communities facing similar plights.

"You need to make noise and get the school in your community because it's something the students really need in order to succeed in their lives," she said. "I would encourage all the leaders to really make noise, the way Shannen did with our school, and get the students involved. Tell them never to give up hope and to always believe that their dream will come true."

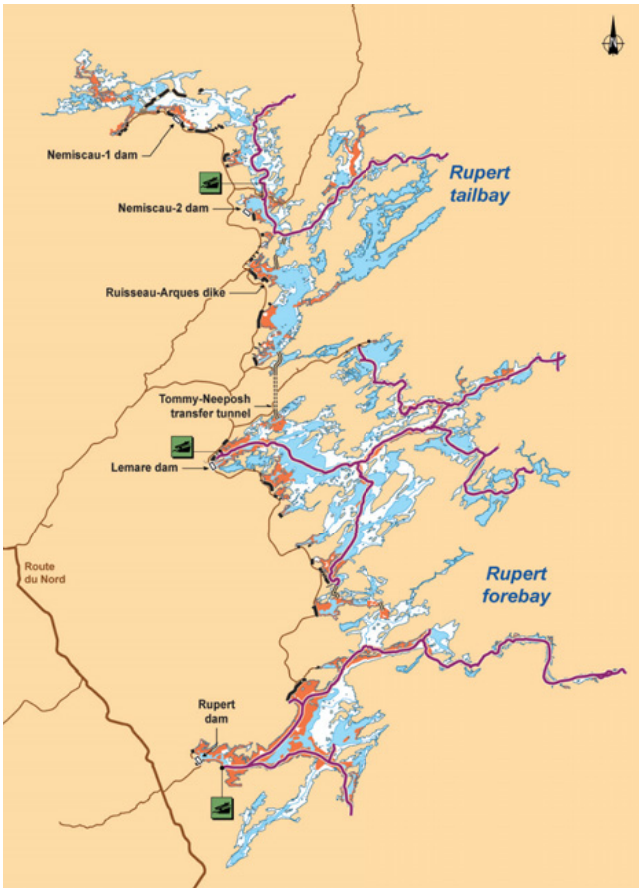
Both Spence and Angus mentioned the small prizes kids look forward to, most of which other students take for granted – like having a hallway and a locker to keep your school books in. For these kids, who have been learning in ill-equipped portables for years, the stability and comfort of a proper school will be welcome.

There's still a bit of waiting to do, however. Officials estimate construction will wrap up in late 2013 or early 2014, meaning the first classes would likely begin in September 2014. But this time, there's physical proof of the coming improvements. For a community that has suffered so many hardships in the past decade, this kind of proof is groundbreaking.

Hydlo and FRIENDS unplugged

Rupert diversion bays: Safe boating!

The Rupert diversion bays can be navigated safely. A large area within the bays has been cleared. As well, a 180-km network of navigation corridors, selected by talleymen, has been marked to facilitate boating. The corridors are free of wood debris and can be used safely.



More than 300 navigation signs were installed by tallymen in the spring of 2011 to mark the navigation corridors.

Land users traveled through the navigation corridors in the fall of 2011 to make sure they were free of obstacles.

Diversion bay navigation charts are available at the following address: **www.hydloandfriends.com**

Launch day

The Grand Chief helps open the Eastmain 1-A and Rupert Diversion project

By Amy German

A special ceremony to inaugurate the Eastmain-1-A and Rupert Diversion project was held at the powerhouse on June 28.

Many high-profile guests attended, including Premier Jean Charest and cabinet ministers Pierre Corbeil, Geoffrey Kelley and Clément Gignac, as well as Hydro-Québec president Thierry Vandal and the mayors of Chibougamau, Chapais and Labelle sur Quevillon.

Representing the Crees were 34 trappers from Mistissini, Nemaska, Waskaganish and Eastmain whose traplines were directly impacted by the diversion.

Also in attendance were Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, Chief Matthew Wapachee of Nemaska and Deputy Chief Johnny Tomatuk from Eastmain.

The following are excerpts from Coon Come's speech made at the inauguration:

"This project was negotiated by my people. My people participated in its design. My people participated in the construction. My people participated in establishing and monitoring the environmental standards. And my people will even participate in its operations. And we, as Nations, will benefit from the electricity it generates.

"I am here today also to honour the tallymen who sacrificed parts of their lands for the project and gave meaning and value to 'Cree consent'. It was our trappers who came up with the idea for the 3-km tunnel that connects the Rupert Diversion Bays. This tunnel prevented hundreds of hectares from being flooded while ensuring a land bridge for hunters and trappers to access the other side of the flooded area without risk. It is only fitting that this tunnel bears the name of the late Tommy Neeposh, who, despite the flooding of his land, to the very end insisted that we all work together to share the wealth of the land.

"This project has broken new barriers in terms of environment protection: when the construction phase is completed, we will have ensured that 15-20% of the total cost of the project will have gone to environment protection and enhancement measures, this compared with the less than 1% for the entire La-Grande project. This standard is something we can be proud of and hold up as an example to other developers.

"Indeed, I had mix emotions in coming to this inauguration. We have come a long way from lack of recognition of Cree rights, and lack of recognition of Cree hunting and trapping way-of-life. We are now working together, using former agreements as foundations to build better relationships with Quebec."

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Montreal's Native Women's Shelter holds its annual meeting

On June 20, the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal held its Annual General Meeting and Public Information Session at the Maritime Plaza Hotel in Montreal.

The meeting kicked off with performances by the Buffalo Hat Singers and traditional hoop dancers who entertained the audience of 20.

Besides the performances, the budget was discussed and board elections were held. Two new members elected onto the board; they are Charlotte Burns and Jessica Beruden.

The main subject of discussion was a fundraiser being planned for October 9 at the Rialto Theatre in order to celebrate the shelter's 25 years of existence and to raise $25,000 for a 12-unit transition housing facility.

The shelter has been working with Batir Son Cartier to find a location for the new building. The new facility will enable Native women in Montreal who have fallen on hard times to reintegrate into society in a fully furnished apartment.

Since 1987, the shelter has been providing help to First Nations, Inuit and Métis women as well as instilling a strong cultural identity for the women and their children.

Goldcorp's Éléonore project receives award for safety

On June 17, a team representing Goldcorp's Éléonore Project attended a ceremony in Ottawa where the mine was presented with the F.J. O'Connell Trophy for 2011 for its safety record.

The Éléonore project received the award under the category of "Underground operations with more than 400,000 hours". Since 2009, Goldcorp's policies have reduced the accident rate by around 75%.

Since 1966, the F.J. O'Connell Trophy rewards employers for their work in accident prevention along with promoting good occupational safety practices.

General Manager Guy Belleau said, "Since the beginning of various operations in 2006, people at the Éléonore site [have been] working hard to recognize workers' initiatives in occupational health and safety."

The Health and Safety Coordinator for the mining project, Jean-Guy Lévesque said, "Our policy, always, is to strictly enforce the rules governing worker safety. I would like to congratulate all of those who, every day, comply with these rules and make them a way of life, both for themselves and for their co-workers."

The Éléonore project has already begun picking up steam ever since it received the certificate of authorization last November, along with the collaborative agreement signed with the First Nation of Wemindji, the Grand Council of the Crees, and the Cree Regional Authority in February.

Located in the northeast corner of the Opinaca Reservoir, the goldmine is projected to start production in 2014 with an approximate 15-year lifespan, which will boost employment levels for the locals in the James Bay region.

Graduation at Northern College opens new opportunities

Students at Northern College in Moosonee, Ontario, celebrated their graduation from the Academic and Career Entrance (ACE), Personal Support Worker, and Social Service Worker programs.

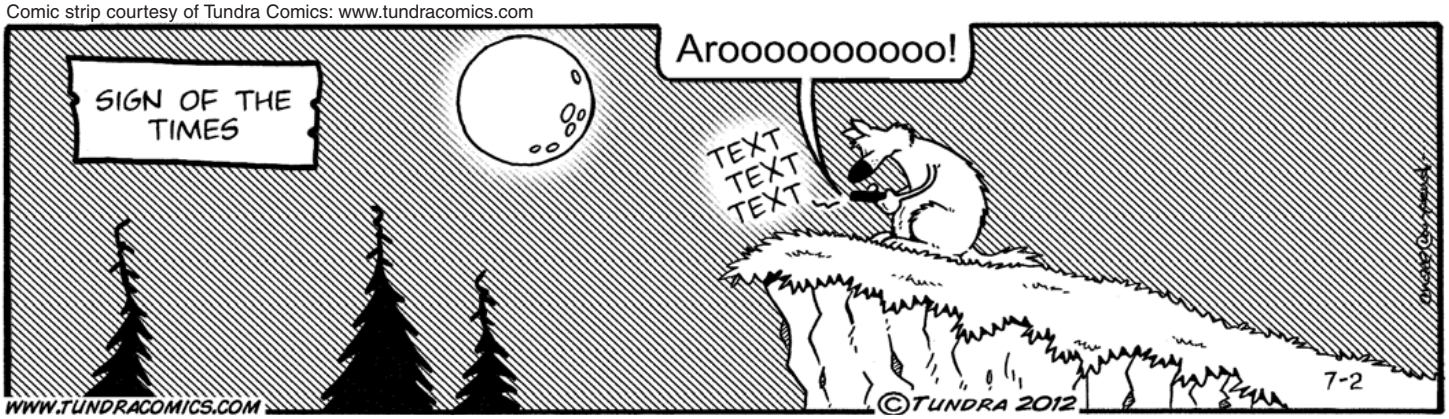
The ACE program is the school's high school equivalency degree, which allows students who lack a high-school diploma to earn eligibility for many college and university programs across the country. The full-time program is demanding for the students, many of whom have children, but the opportunities it opens are worth the short nights of sleep, according to students.

"Personally, there have been many obstacles and struggles for myself while attending the ACE program," said Jessica Linklater, the valedictorian for the program. "There were many times when I felt giving up was the only option I had. My biggest motivations were the ones who call me mom, because my education is for them. I want to give my children the future that they deserve with many opportunities and dreams for them to chase."

While some are moving on to the college-level programs at the school, all of the students expect to contribute positively to the communities of Moosonee and Moose Factory.

Tim Robinson, the ceremony's guest speaker, summed up this sentiment in his speech: "Your careers are incredibly valuable to the communities in which you serve. We need you."

Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com



feature

Straight from the top

Discussing the Strateco uranium file with the Grand Chief

by Amy German

No other issue has reignited the Cree spirit to fight for the rights of the land than the debate over whether uranium exploration should be allowed on Cree territory near Mistissini in the last 20 years.

It was in fact 20 years ago when a dedicated bunch of Crees led by then Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come travelled to the US and Europe to fight another project for development that also did not meet Cree approval – the Great Whale project.

In the last issue of *the Nation*, we published excerpts of the June 5-6 hearings in Mistissini as well as a reaction interview with Strateco President Guy Hébert.

In that the Crees of Eeyou Istchee are subject to their own governance, *the Nation* decided that it was also necessary to see exactly where the Grand Council of the Crees stands on this issue.

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The Nation: *Given that Mistissini Chief Richard Shecapio and so many of the people of Mistissini have come out against uranium mining on nearby traditional territory, how much leverage do you think the Crees will have in getting this project halted in the context of the protections of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)?*

Coon Come: The Cree Nation has the fundamental human right to consent or

withhold consent to industrial or other development in our territory. We have always asserted others do not have the right to make decisions for the Cree people that will fundamentally affect Cree communities, Cree health, the environment and the future well-being of Eeyou Istchee for generations to come. The environmental and social impact assessment process under the JBNQA provides just one mechanism for proposed development projects to be considered and Cree rights to be protected. But there are many others that transcend the JBNQA. In the past, Eeyou have taken all available steps in Quebec, the rest of Canada and internationally to assert and protect our Cree Aboriginal, treaty and other human rights. The leverage available to the Cree Nation is directly proportional to the unity, determination and courage of our people, and not any external factor.

TN: *Strateco is adamant that this project get underway despite the views of the Crees on uranium and they are currently going with the stance that social acceptability for the project is not an attainable goal because the Crees have been "brainwashed" by "radical activists". Do you believe that the Crees have been misled?*

CC: These statements by Strateco betray a fundamental paternalism towards the Crees, and a deep misunderstanding of our status in Eeyou Istchee. We have always lived here, and we will still be here in thousands of years. We take seriously our responsibility to ensure that the land that sustains us will remain healthy and truly sustainable for all future generations. Our lives in this land do not depend on the booms and busts of mineral prices and the industrial ambitions of faraway people.

In relation to uranium mining in Eeyou Istchee, "social acceptability" is not a checkbox that industry proponents like Strateco can simply "tick" by means of promises and reassurances delivered by industry spokesmen. Uranium mining and refining leaves behind enormous quantities of radioactive and toxic tailings that will require perpetual and effective containment and maintenance for hundreds of thousands of years to come. Strateco cannot deny this fact. The Cree people will decide for ourselves whether we are prepared to accept this long-term burden and risk in Eeyou Istchee, long after Strateco and even the nuclear industry no longer exist.

TN: *Strateco President Guy Hébert recently told the Nation that they have not been given a fair shot in Mistissini because the community had allowed some of these "insane" activists access to the students at the high school, while his company had not been given the same access to the community's youth. Hébert said he found this so disturbing that he was planning on taking this "file" up with the Grand Council since it is his perspective that these youth are being grossly misinformed. What is the Grand Council's response to this? Do you think the company should have access to the kids?*

CC: Many times in the past, we have been told that the independent expertise that we obtain is not trustworthy, and that we must accept what the industry people feed us. Crees, like everyone else, have the right to access the best possible expertise that we can find, and to determine for ourselves what is good information. There can be no doubt that M. Hébert's message is being delivered into Cree communities, by Strateco and by government. There is a communication agreement in place between Strateco and Mistissini. If M. Hébert is now suggesting that the Cree people and youth should only listen to one side – the industry side – he is making a terrible mistake.

I am very proud of Cree youth. I'm a youth! I am always impressed by the initiative, passion and social commitment that our youth show, including concerning Strateco's uranium mining plans. Cree youth have always played an important role in inspiring our people. I have great faith in the ability of Cree youth and all Cree people to study and understand these important issues, and to participate in our nation's decision-making processes.

"THESE STATEMENTS BY STRATECO BETRAY A FUNDAMENTAL PATERNALISM TOWARDS THE CREES, AND A DEEP MISUNDERSTANDING OF OUR STATUS IN EEYOU ISTCHEE. **WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED HERE, AND WE WILL STILL BE HERE IN THOUSANDS OF YEARS**... OUR LIVES IN THIS LAND DO NOT DEPEND ON THE BOOMS AND BUSTS OF MINERAL PRICES AND THE INDUSTRIAL AMBITIONS OF FARAWAY PEOPLE."

TN: *If the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission turns around and grants access to Strateco despite the wishes of the Cree people, what would be the next step that the Grand Council would take on the Crees' behalf given that the community is opposed and wants to fight to protect the land?*

CC: Uranium mining is an enormous global industry, and at the moment it is very profitable. Strateco is just one of many well-funded corporations that want to extract uranium from Eeyou Istchee and leave radioactive and toxic waste – 99% of the ore extracted from the ground – behind for the Crees to live with for thousands of years to come. If the Cree Nation wishes to prevent uranium mining in Eeyou Istchee, we must expect a hard fight from industry and from government.

The Grand Council is the servant of the Cree people. It is not for the Grand

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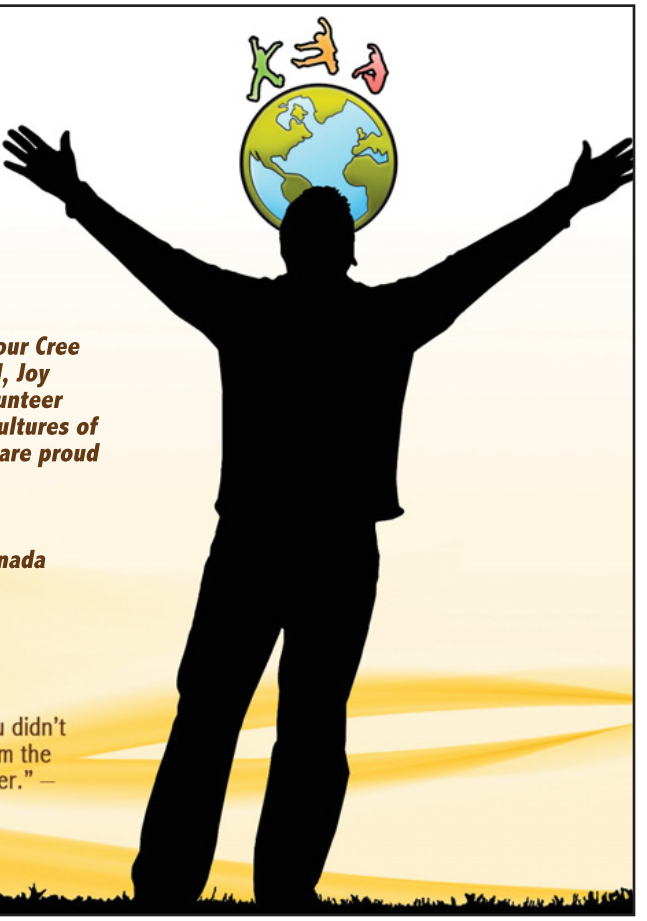

On behalf of the Cree Nation Youth Council, we would like to wish our Cree youth, Debbie Petawabano, Carole Ann Mapachee, Russell Diamond, Joy Kitchen & Alexandre Blacksmith a wonderful time in Peru. Your volunteer work will enrich your lives as you explore and interact with other cultures of this world. Live your lives to the fullest and enjoy your youth! We are proud of you. Safe travels and we'll see you in August.

Thank you Canada World Youth for making this trip possible!
Follow our Cree Youth on Facebook "Cree Adventures in Peru – Canada World Youth"

Joshua Iserhoff — ***Youth Grand Chief***
Kenneth Tanoush — ***Deputy Youth Grand Chief***

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." – Mark Twain

Gearing up for a battle

Northern communities divided over uranium exploration

By Jesse Staniforth

"We're going into a strong battle," said Ugo Lapointe of le Coalition Pour que le Québec ait meilleure mine! (a.k.a. Québec meillure mine), about the recent decision by Mistissini's Chief and Council to oppose the request by Strateco Resources' request for advanced uranium exploration on the traditional lands of Mistissini Crees.

Speaking after the Chibougamau public hearings held by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) about Strateco's application for advanced exploration, Lapointe said, "The Crees are positioning themselves very strongly on this issue, but you have to remember that [Strateco] has spent nearly $100 million on the Matoush project so far. They'll do everything they can to not lose this project. This may mean legal actions against the Crees or against the Quebec government."

At the public hearings, twice as many Crees spoke as residents of Chibougamau, and they were overwhelmingly opposed to Strateco's advanced uranium exploration project. Lapointe indicated that the question of opening uranium mining for the first time in Quebec history makes this an issue like no other.

"There has never been a situation like this in the Quebec mining industry," he said, referring to the fact that the decisions made about uranium exploration mining may affect the future of such work done in the province.

"I believe the mining industry is going to rally around Strateco to put pressure on the government, and possibly on the Crees, to avoid the precedent of a project being rejected like this. It's not going to be easy."

Importantly, Chibougamau Mayor Manon Cyr came out strongly in support of the exploration project, noting that the city had been built upon mineral extraction. She stopped short of endorsing the possibility of uranium mining, however, stressing that there would need to be a comprehensive environmental site assessment before such work could take place. She ended her presentation to the public hearings by referring to an anti-uranium mining document she had been given and asking the CNSC if the information contained in it about health and environmental risks was true.

"In the past two days," said Lapointe, after the hearings, "we've already seen the rhetoric of this battle on the part of the company. And if public opinion swings in favour of the company, the rhetoric will be twofold. They're going to say that Mistissini and the Crees were 'brainwashed' by environmental activists and that their position is misinformed. There's also the chance that they're going to say that this project is on Category III lands [of the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement], and that all Quebecers should have a say in deciding what kinds of development takes place on those lands."

"I BELIEVE THE MINING INDUSTRY IS GOING TO RALLY AROUND STRATECO TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT, AND POSSIBLY ON THE CREES, TO AVOID THE PRECEDENT OF A PROJECT BEING REJECTED LIKE THIS."

This last point may alarm residents of Eeyou Istchee, whose access to Category III traditional lands is limited and who have seen some Cree hunters in recent years charged with firearms violations by the Municipalité de Baie James while hunting on those lands – a subject that Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come broached with Premier Jean Charest in 2010.

"In the short term," said Lapointe, "I think it's important for Cree representatives, both from Mistissini and from the Grand Council, to make a clear statement of how they came to this decision. Because I think they did due diligence, looked at many different sources of information, listened to many companies, listened to experts from the Nuclear Safety Commission, and considered independent expertise. They weighed the potential impacts and benefits and made an enlightened decision. So there should be a clear statement to that effect, and that wasn't done this week."

Lapointe said the Crees should be thinking about future public relations, which could be anchored now by properly sketching out a detailed description of their position.

"If they don't do it now," he said, "it might be difficult to swing public opinion later on. We've already heard it from the elected representatives in Chibougamau: the whole set of excuses about how 'We consulted the experts'. They're trying to suggest that Chibougamau and [le Conférence Régional des élus de la Baie James] did their homework and the Crees didn't. I'm sure if we lined up the work they did, we'd find that the Crees actually did more homework before arriving at their conclusion."

Adrift on the Bay

Told by Harry Scipio, Chisasibi
Translated and transcribed by Brian Webb
www.beesum-communications.com/legends

Once my late father was with a group of hunters on a sheet of ice that drifted away into open water. That story amazed me. I shall tell this story.

We were camped at Mânhîkuskâkimî. The men made their way to a group of Inuit. The Elder of that Inuit camp was called Kâ Wâbikhushit (Clothed in White). Three of our men went there by dog team. The Inuit Elder ordered that they shall all go seal hunting.

In the morning, the wind blew strong. All the hunters left by dog teams. They reached the floe edge. The wind was getting stronger. Eventually, they knew they were drifting away from the mainland.

They headed back towards the mainland but the ice had broken off. They saw the water where the ice had split apart. They could still see the ice on the other side of the gap. They unloaded the canoe from their sledge and paddled across.

The Inuit Elder's sons were taken across first, plus three dogs. One of the dogs was from my father's team, still a young pup. They went back for the others after they unloaded the first trip on the mainland ice. The drifting ice was beyond sight now, but they still paddled out. They eventually reached the group on the drifting ice sheet.

They abandoned my father's dog team. The Inuit Elder wanted to load his sledge on the canoe. The canoe swayed dangerously. They decided to push the sledge off the canoe into the water.

They paddled long and the wind blew strong. They eventually reached the mainland ice. It wasn't at the same spot as before. They hauled their canoe on the ice and the first group taken across were out of sight.

My father was with Chîmanikûk Chshâyyu (Old Ship Cook – George Snowboy Sr). He began running to look for the others. He knew which direction they were. As he ran, he called out and listened for them to call back.

He finally heard someone. He sounded like he was crying. He called out and ran towards the sound of the crying. He then saw the young Inuit crying.

He said to them, "We've arrived. Come on." They all ran back to where the others were. They saw the trail of the others and followed. Once they reached the others, they all began walking together. They walked for a long time.

They knew they were on land now by the shore ice that is all piled up and broken. They pulled the canoe up the shore.

The Inuit Elder told us to wait. He wanted to walk around. He left but wasn't gone for long. He came back and said that there was probably a nearby lodge in that direction.

They headed for that direction. They untied the dogs and the dogs ran off. The dogs sensed where the lodge was. They finally reached the Inuit's home near the trail.

This was the story told by my father. There were three Cree men – my late father, Chîmânikûk Chshâyyu and Charlie Bobbish. They lost all their dogs and their sledges. They dragged their canoe with them. They lashed the dogs they had saved to pull the canoe.

This was such a dangerous experience. This is the story of my father. They where in a very dangerous situation when they drifted away on a sheet of ice.

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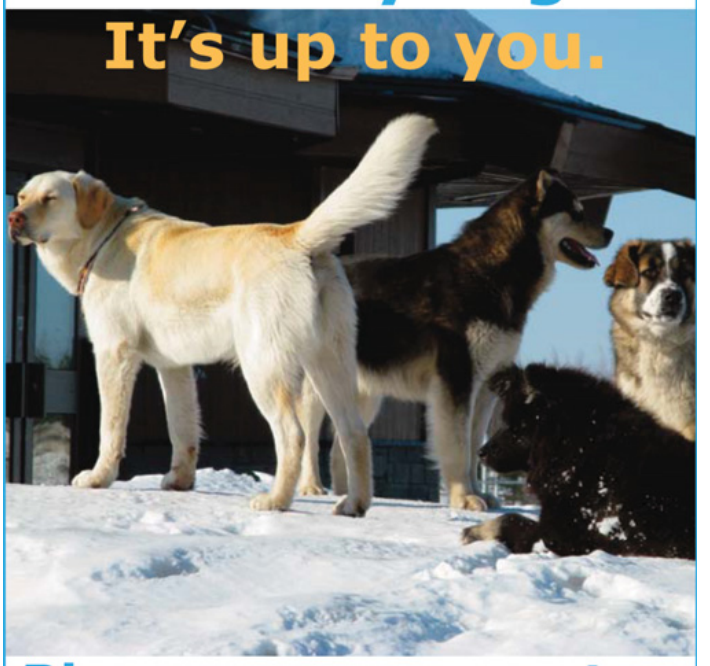

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Keep the linguistic balance

Mistissini parents and school councillors reject the CSB's language plan

By Brandon Judd

Parents and teachers at Mistissini's Voyageur Memorial stood firm against a part of the new Cree School Board (CSB) plan that would have eliminated the school's highly successful English reading program and potentially jeopardized high school students' chances of graduating.

The new plan, part of the CSB's Cree Local School Improvement Program (LSIP), sought to implement the Cree language for 100% of the school day. Voyageur runs a 50/50 system, in which half the day is taught in Cree, while the other half is taught in either English or French, depending on the parents' choice when they register their child.

"When [the LSIP] was first introduced for the schools to implement, we were concerned," said Mistissini Deputy Chief John S. Matoush. "Parents were concerned that existing programs, which had made progress on the reading and writing levels, would be disturbed, and this success might be lost when the LSIP program would be implemented."

Voyageur Memorial didn't reject the plan just because of this, however. They said there was a lack of resources and teachers to support the initiative, and it would result in an underwhelming success rate and a great deal of inertia.

"The overwhelming decision was 'not right now'," recounted school councillor Jerry Coon. "The parents also said, listen: if you do incorporate the Cree language and culture program, it will affect our children's learning and reading level, and graduation rates will be affected. And listen: if you don't have the teachers or the qualified material, then why do it?"

Parents were specifically worried that the swift implementation called for by the LSIP would threaten current high school kids' ability to graduate. Cree language courses would be compulsory in the final years of secondary school, and students who haven't been speaking Cree would be in danger of failing these courses.

"It's not to say we don't support Cree language," said Matoush. "But we wanted to find a way to implement it slowly at the high school level so the readiness and preparation would be there for the youth studying the Cree language. Leaving the high school at status quo means students can continue with the curriculum they're currently using. That way, their studies won't be jeopardized."

The other threat parents saw was for the elementary-level reading program. Voyageur Memorial is the only school in the CSB with "Success For All" (SFA), a private U.S.-based reading program that stresses heavily researched learning strategies and statistical analysis of students' progress. Since starting the program at the end of 2009, the school's average reading level has improved dramatically. There was just a single student at the expected reading level for their grade at the outset of the program. Now, there are more than 50 at-grade readers.

The SFA program was seen as a promising and successful way to teach Cree children strong reading skills. School officials stressed that reading problems in the early grades can slip by teachers and start to snowball, undermining learning in future years. The comprehensive testing of the SFA program ensures reading difficulties are properly identified early, and specific practice is assigned to improve students' skill in problem areas.

When the word came in that the new curriculum would put the SFA program in jeopardy, the school held a series of meetings with the school council and the parents' association to discuss their options. Their position on the matter was clear, according to officials.

"Parents thought the SFA program was better, and why change it now when it's working," said Coon. "We will consider the new curriculum on a year-to-year basis. The CSB doesn't have certified Cree-culture or Cree-language

teachers, and the school material isn't available either. We hope that with the support of the council, we will keep the program we have in place now."

Right now, the reading program is only in implementation for the elementary grades at Voyageur Memorial, but the school had plans to expand this down to Cree Kindergarten and pre-K levels. Young students split their time evenly between the regular curriculum and the SFA program; the mornings involve intensive English reading courses, while the afternoons cover regular school courses – biology, math, history – in Cree and either English or French.

"The school committee and the community and parents said they didn't support the idea of having a Cree language of instruction at 100% in a full day," Matoush said. "They wanted parents to have a choice when it comes to the education of their children, that they be able to choose English or French with Cree."

The school sent a series of requests to the CSB, outlining their concerns in multiple areas, and asking the school board to reconsider changing the 50% SFA-50% regular curriculum program that has been so well received. If the number of hours committed to the SFA were reduced, school officials fear there would be a significant drop in the success rate of its students. The school is still awaiting response.

Vash Gon -Jicarilla, 1904

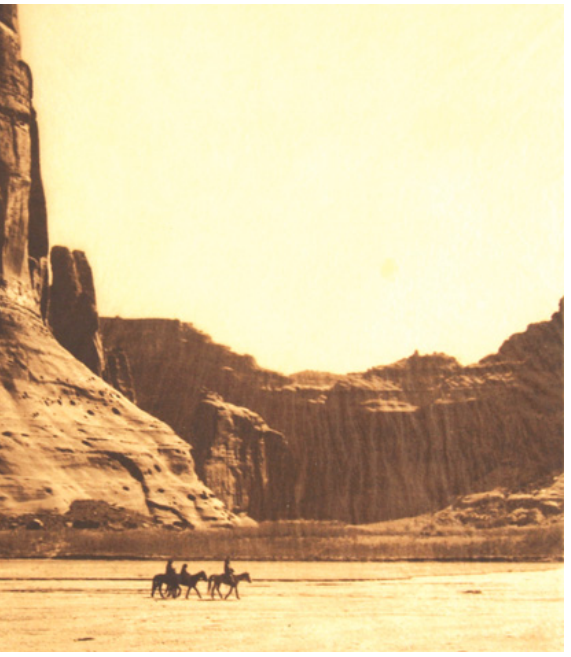
Cañon de Chelly - Navaho, 1904

Kutenai Duck Hunter, 1910

Still here

McCord Museum hosts a mesmerizing exhibit of Edward Curtis photographs

By Martin Siberok



The Vanishing Race - Navaho, 1904

Apache Babe, 1903

Two Strike, 1908

"The Indian as he has hitherto been is on the point of passing away," states US President Theodore Roosevelt on Oct. 1, 1906. "It would be a veritable calamity if a vivid and truthful record of these conditions were not kept."

Those words appear in the foreword in *The North American Indian*, a 20-volume series of text and photographs by American artist and photographer Edward Curtis.

This encyclopedic body of work – published over a 23-year period (1907-1930) – contains over 2200 photographs that capture the disappearing way of life of the American Indian.

The McCord Museum hosts an exhibit of 30 of these photos entitled *Edward Curtis: Beyond Measure*. Over a 27-year period, between 1900 and 1927, Curtis traveled the United States and Canada west of the Mississippi and took over 40,000 photographs of the Aboriginal Peoples living there.

This modest, yet captivating selection is a blend of portraits (close-ups and full-bodied shots), landscapes and lifestyle details, featuring cultural rituals and daily activities. Collectively they offer the contemporary viewer a glimpse into a vanishing world that existed 100 years ago.

Boasting a keen eye, Curtis – known as the Shadow Catcher – captures the moment with extraordinary intensity and meticulousness.

His subjects are poised and regal. They include aging chiefs, proud warriors, female beauties and hopeful youth.

The landscapes provide us with an understanding of the expansiveness of the American Plains home to the Ogalala, Piegan and Atsina, the ruggedness of the Southwest where the Apache and Navaho lived and roamed, and the rocky high country inhabited by the Apsaroke

Details of a traditional lifestyle depict a group of Flathead Natives performing a war dance, a Wishham fisherman standing next to a raging river dip-netting for salmon, and an Apsaroke woman collecting firewood outside her teepee on snowy winter's day.

Though Curtis often staged and retouched his images, his idealized visions still provide us with an exceptional document of the fading Aboriginal world.

The exhibit's lead-off photo is entitled "The Vanishing Race – Navaho, 1904" and depicts a single line of riders moving into darkness. The path they are traveling is narrow and the lead riders are already mere outlines as they move toward an unknown future.

Yet viewing "Kutenai Duck Hunter, 1910" portraits a silhouetted hunter in his canoe in the rushes on a lake waiting for the fowl to come into range. It is an activity that is still valid today, especially for the Cree during Goose Break.

The breathtaking vista depicted in "Cañon de Chelly – Navaho, 1904" was shot in northern Arizona and looks like it comes straight out a John Ford film. In the foreground seven horsemen and a dog transverse a barren desert landscape with huge buttes dominating the background.

The portrait of "Two Strike, 1908" is an extraordinary image. Featuring the wizen countenance of this Brulé Elder (born in 1821), the photograph highlights the deep crevices that line this 87-year-old man's face and is a testament to the things he has witnessed throughout the 19th century.

In sharp contrast stands "Apache Babe, 1903" featuring a smiling infant with eyes full of hope, who is strapped into a wooden back carrier. The image underlines the universality shared by all infants regardless of race, ethnicity or background.

A wall text by sociologist and artist Guy Sioui Durand, a member of the Huron-Wendat community, provides this exhibit with an invaluable dimension.

"Although they evoke an internalized exodus, these images resonate so much with current Native resurgency's voices and rhythms that the 'eye hears' them loud and clear.

"They carry a hopeful message from tribe to tribe because these photographs perennially reveal the indomitable peoples who still inhabit this yet untamed North America.

We're here."

For those are will not be visiting Montreal in the next five months, you can go the McCord's website and see this wonderful collection online. Though the images are small compared to the 11x14 images hanging on the walls at the museum, they still convey the message that Curtis wanted the world to see.

Edward Curtis: Beyond Measure at the McCord Museum until Nov. 18. Info: mccord-museum.qc.ca

Pima Baskets, 1907

Hut one, hut two

Six-a-side football season kicks off in James Bay

By Daniel Coyle

Six-a-side football is returning to Eeyou Istchee with the start of the inaugural season of the James Bay Abitibi Football League (JBAFL). The brainchild of James Bay Eagles coach Trevor Allen Monaghan, the JBAFL will be comprised of 20 teams spanning six divisions. The founding of the JBAFL and growth in interest among young athletes comes largely as result of the success of the Chisasibi-based James Bay Eagles football program, particularly the Eagles' success in recent years competing against teams from across Canada at the prestigious Six Nations Challenge football tournament.

The JBAFL's six divisions include Youth Flag Football, Girls' Flag Football, Peewee Tackle Football, Bantam Tackle Football, Midget Tackle Football and Men's Flag Football. JBAFL teams will include the James Bay Eagles and their traditional rivals Mistissini Mustangs, who will field teams in every division, and two new entries, the Val-d'Or Bears, who will play in every division except Peewee Tackle, and the Waswanipi Gladiators, who will participate in Youth Flag, Girls' Flag and Midget Tackle.

"We've been working to bring the game to other communities for some time now," said Monaghan. "And there has been an explosion of interest among our young people. We have over 120 kids registered in (the James Bay Eagles) program, with 67 registered in the tackle programs. And with the addition of teams in Val-d'Or and Waswanipi, we are going to see some competitive football."

Gridiron action gets underway on the weekend of July 14-15, with additional games on July 28-29, leading up to the Big River Bowl Championship on the weekend of August 11-12.

The James Bay Eagles will also be represented on Team Canada, when

they take to the field against Team USA in the annual 6-a-side Can-Am Bowl, taking place in Biggar, Saskatchewan on July 7.

Chisasibi's Vernon Neacappo, the Eagles' 2011 Midget Team MVP, has established a reputation as a player who quietly gets things done on the offensive side of the ball, and after an outstanding 2011 season was selected to represent Canada without having to try out for the national team.

"The (Team Canada) coaches wanted Vernon to travel to try out, but that would have conflicted with time he had planned with his grandparents," explained Monaghan. "So they sent us the playbook and we put some film of Vernon on YouTube for the coaches to see. Between that and what the coaches had seen of Vernon last year, they had no problem adding him to the team."

Neacappo, 18, tries to model his game after Arian Foster, star running back of the NFL's Houston Texans – a player many believe will score more points than any other player in the NFL this season. But Neacappo also understands that it takes more than raw talent to be successful on the field, and as a result he has spent countless hours training at Chisasibi Fitness Centre, doing what is required to bring his game to the next level.

"The Fitness Centre has been really great for my training," said Neacappo. "My goal is to reach the university level of football. And I also plan on playing with the Nepean Redskins in Ottawa this fall."

"We are getting pretty excited," said Monaghan. "Vernon has been training for the last three years, but the last month-and-a-half has been pretty intense. He is running three to five times a week, and lifting weights at the centre. He has got something good going. Vernon's success is a true testament of the value of our football and fitness program. He is not just representing the Eagles or the Cree, he is representing Canada.

"Some of these kids, like Vernon, will be recruited by schools in the next few years," added Monaghan. "So this is not just about the football or weight-room statistics, it is about helping them build their future."

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Fighting for a fair share

Atikamekw Nations campaign against unequal resource rights

By Mark Della Posta

Atikamekw First Nations in Quebec are increasingly angry over rampant resource exploitation of their traditional lands by outside companies that always appear to have the provincial government in their corner.

The Atikamekw Nation launched a campaign June 26 to gain full recognition as a distinct nation with rights to the ancestral lands they call the Nitaskinan in the Upper Mauricie region. The campaign is in large part a response to unbridled logging operations by Kruger Inc. in Atikamekw territory.

In response, the Atikamekw are staging road and rail blockades to stop Kruger Inc. from working in the area.

The Atikamekw set up roadblocks along Highway 25, between La Tuque and Wetomaci, as well as the road between Parent and Clova. They have also set up blockades along CN's railway, preventing them from transporting merchandise, particularly logs that are to be milled in Parent and Trois-Rivières. The communities are not preventing locals from using Highway 25, and are allowing Via Rail passenger trains to use the railways. For the time being, the blockades have been designed to hit the economic interests in the region that are harming the Atikamekw communities.

"The Atikamekw and other First Nations are the most forgotten people in Quebec," observed Opitciwan Chief Christian Awashish. "The difficult socio-economic situation, the poverty, lack of housing and unemployment that the Atikamekw people must deal with are deplorable, especially with the abundant resources on the territories that have benefited the Quebec population. We want a concrete and immediate change in order to give hope to our children."

Meanwhile, in the Témiscaming region, the chiefs of Eagle Village and Wolf Lake expressed their frustration with the Quebec government over its failure to gain consent from the two Atikamekw nations for mining operations on their lands.

photo by Karline Paul

Paul-Émile and Eva Ottawa, Christian Awashish and David Boivin

According to Eagle Village Chief Madeleine Paul, the two communities are asking that Matamec Resources, along with its partner Toyota Tsusho America, pay for an independent environmental sustainability study before they proceed with the mining of rare earth elements.

"Matamec is conducting their own environmental studies," said Paul. "We want independent tests done. We can't risk their results being off because the mine is right in the middle of our territory. All we are asking for are the funds for us to conduct the study on our own."

According to Paul, Matamec hasn't exactly been the easiest of companies to deal with.

"Our last meeting with Matamec was April 17," she said. "They haven't contacted us since. Apparently, they applied for a permit from the Ministry of Natural Resources and are about to start mining. We know they're setting up their power stations. We know they're drilling. We have to get this study done soon."

Paul argues that a mine as important as this could have serious negative ramifications on the territory. "The mine is right in the middle of our hunting and trapping grounds," she said. "It's also right near Lake Kipawa, our primary source of drinking water. The lake isn't like a tree that's being cut down and that can be replanted. Once it's contaminated, it's ruined."

The two communities have set a July 6 deadline for an agreement to be struck between the mining companies and the First Nations communities. According to Wolf Lake Chief Harry St. Denis, the communities are prepared to take bold

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steps that could have serious consequences for the companies involved.

"We'll physically block them if we have to," St. Denis said. "It doesn't have to get to that though. Their lawyers are telling our lawyers that we're not far from an agreement. But the deadline is coming up soon. It's important we get this done because we'll still be here when the project is over. The mine life for this project should only be about 12 years. We need to be able to live here once it's over."

St. Denis added that obtaining the funds for the environmental study is only the first step in a much longer process. The communities haven't even begun discussing royalties to come from the minerals extracted from the lands were never ceded to the crown.

According to Christian Awashish, the Atikamekw Nation has a long history of development and resource extraction, with disastrous environmental damage but no economic form of compensation.

"Development near our community dates back to the 1920s, with construction of the Gouin Reservoir," he said. "Developments like that have destroyed the community. My community of Opitciwan has been the victim of flooding and has been displaced on two occasions without any compensation."

The situation reached a boiling point, Awashish said, when his community was denied significant logging rights to its own resource or any form of significant compensation.

"We have a mill in the community," he said. "We receive a small volume of wood from the logging companies. That volume is ridiculous and insufficient as it is. More recently, a nearby mill closed down and the entire volume was given to Kruger Inc. We were completely ignored and we have no idea why."

The Atikamekw Nation has also made clear their intention to intensify the pressure tactics if their demands are not met.

After sending a letter to the provincial government demanding a meeting with Premier Jean Charest, the Atikamekw received an answer from Geoffrey Kelley, the Minister of Native Affairs. According to the Atikamekw, Kelley mentioned a meeting, but not that it would include Charest.

"Enough is enough," said Awashish. "The status quo is not good enough. The logging is happening in the heart of our lands. It belongs to us and we're owed some kind of compensation."

Chief Madeleine Paul

Like the Atikamekw in the Upper Mauricie, the communities of Eagle Village and Wolf Lake are being forced to take confront exploitation of their territory by moneyed interests with government support or negligence. Both communities are calling for government intervention, as well as solidarity between different First Nations.

"It's in desperation that we're taking these measures," said Awashish. "I hope that all Quebecers are paying attention to our cause."

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Friendship centres "un-friended"

A look at the current state of Montreal's friendship centre crisis

By Amy German

In March, the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal (NFCM) made national headlines as its doors were about to close because the centre had lost its core funding and membership through the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ), the provincial branch under Canada's Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program.

Four months, later however, the centre is still open, having found funding from other sources while a new steering committee has formed under the auspices of the RCAAQ to start to building a new community centre for Montreal's Aboriginal population.

According to Edith Cloutier, President of the RCAAQ, it was actually a unanimous decision put out by the Board of Directors for the NFCM to terminate its membership with the provincial organization.

Cloutier told *the Nation* months ago that while the RCAAQ had made numerous attempts to help the NFCM meet the criteria required to receive federal funds chanelled through the provincial organization for friendship centres, the NFCM simply wouldn't cooperate.

Instead, she said that the NFCM was adamant about staying focused on programming geared towards Montreal's Aboriginal homeless at the cost of programming geared towards other segments of the Aboriginal population.

Since the spring, the RCAAQ has regrouped and the organization is forming a steering committee comprised of concerned members of the Aboriginal community to help rebuild.

"What the Regroupement wanted to do was clearly identify to members of the urban Aboriginal community, people who wanted to get involved in building a new community and socio-cultural centre that is Aboriginal. We had an opportunity to unite about 15 people who are from different fields and different backgrounds but who have the same interest and purpose in working with the RCAAQ in getting another friendship centre up and running," said Cloutier.

This steering committee has since hired a new coordinator, Eric Cardinal of Cardinal Communication, to lead the creation of a new friendship centre. Cardinal will also serve, with former NFCM employee Ida LaBillois-Montour, as one of two official spokespeople who have been selected to speak on behalf of the steering committee.

Members of the steering committee have since met with the NFCM to discuss its position and intent prior to releasing a public letter on June 6 to explain the RCAAQ's position.

The letter, available on the RCAAQ's website, explains the severing of ties but also goes on to explain how the RCAAQ understands the NFCM's position to act as a frontline centre for the homeless and that the NFCM does not wish to create any breaks in the relationship between the RCAAQ and Montreal's Aboriginal communities.

> "WE STILL HAVE AN ALL-INCLUSIVE MANDATE WHILE ADAPTING TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF OUR FUNDERS."

Since then the steering committee has formed a working group to create a new centre.

"This is very good because we at the Regroupement feel that it is not our role to go out and start up friendship centres. They have to be built by the community based on a community vision. And so we are now continuing to support and offering our expertise and resources to this steering committee to help set up the centre and help them get through the next steps," said Cloutier.

Edith Cloutier, President of the RCAAQ

Next this group and its coordinator will seek out a new location to work from until such time that they are ready to find a permanent space to house an all-new multi-service, multi-purpose friendship centre for the Montreal Aboriginal community and Aboriginals passing through Montreal from Quebec, Canada and the United States.

While summer may not be an ideal time to get a new friendship centre off the ground, Cloutier said the objective is to keep moving forward as quickly as possible so that there are plans in place for the fall.

Meanwhile, over at the NFCM, Executive Director Brett Pineau is trying to maintain business as usual now that the organization has managed to secure new funding since falling out with RCAAQ.

"We are in a position of strength, just as much as any other friendship centre from across Quebec or Canada and we are actively working to diversify our funding sources," said Pineau.

According to Pineau, the NFCM has received ongoing and growing commitments from federal, provincial and municipal funding sources. They have recently signed agreements with the federal government for 2012-2014 to the tune of $790,750 through Human Resources Development Canada and Service Canada.

Additional funding has come from the City of Montreal, which, Pineau was happy to say, has pledged to continue its support for the organization. The provincial government has also indicated its willingness to support the centre given the frontline work that NFCM workers provide in the areas of health and social services for Montreal's Aboriginals in need.

Despite their breakaway from the RCAAQ, Pineau insists that there will be no mandate change to the organization nor will we see any kind of divide in services between both centres.

"There is an institutional disconnect between the RCAAQ and the NFCM, however our mandate and mission is to continue to promote, develop and enhance the quality of life for the entire Montreal urban Aboriginal community.

"We are not opposed to another centre, in fact we support the concept. However, everyone has to bear in mind that the funds under the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program (AFCP) are still under dispute in our assessment and this matter is ongoing," said Pineau.

Pineau added that the dispute between the NFCM and the RCAAQ, which is in turn funded through the AFCP, has reached the highest levels of government. It was his opinion that the collapse of the dispute-resolution process demonstrated a structural flaw within the national network and it is the NFCM's aim to ensure that structural changes are implemented in order to prevent this from happening to any other centre across the country.

In terms of the NFCM and the RCAAQ not seeing eye-to-eye when it comes to the role of a friendship centre, Pineau said the services offered by friendship centres are dependent upon the priorities of the funding agencies. In the case of the NFCM, their socio-cultural funding was cut a long time ago. Instead, the focus has been put on basic needs and through organizations like the Homelessness Partnering Strategy the centre will continue to prioritize Montreal's most vulnerable Aboriginals.

Pineau said he has all sorts of plans to reach out to other segments of the Aboriginal population in the city, with awareness campaigns set up through McGill and Concordia universities as well as weekly events for families and Elders.

"Our core mandate and our mission remain unchanged. We are simply adapting to our realities which are basically dictated by our funding arrangements. We still have an all-inclusive mandate while adapting to the requirements of our funders," said Pineau.

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Summer programming cut

Feds freeze funding for Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth

By Amy German

It was not ideal timing. Just as schools let out for summer, the federal government decided to freeze funding for the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY) program at all friendship centres across Canada.

According to Jeffrey Cyr, Executive Director of the National Association of Friendship Centres in Ottawa, the CCAY program provided for community-based, youth-led activities that are designed to connect Aboriginal youth with their culture.

"It built self-esteem, self-confidence and it actually made youth more well-grounded within their communities and their identity. It fosters motivation and leadership so that young people can make positive life choices and thus participate in Canadian society," said Cyr.

The CCAY program offered a variety of programming. It included media and cultural instruction (such as writing, film, photography, and visual and digital arts), youth-created music and dance that was shared with the communities, public performances, drumming, carving, traditional teachings with Elders, language, songs, arts and crafts, talking circles and workshops.

Other projects trained youth in carpentry and building skills so that they could take on community beautification projects. The youth would also do a series of activities that would in the long run connect them to the economy.

"There was a series of jobs and skills they could learn over a period of years. It is important that the youth feel secure so they to find their culture and learn skills within that environment. They need a place to belong because a lot of urban Aboriginal youth are looking for such a place," said Cyr.

The federal government, however, put the brakes on CCAY funding until the program could be revamped to ensure that youth are being streamed into the workforce.

"It's a jobs-and-prosperity focus that is in line with what the government has been focused on since the last federal budget. You can have culturally based programs, but they have to be able to measure how that assists youth in transitioning into the economy, into the workforce and providing skills," said Cyr.

Cyr said he can see the government's mandate being carried out through the CCAY program. For that matter, he said, the program was probably doing just that but not measuring it.

"THERE WAS A SERIES OF JOBS AND SKILLS THEY COULD LEARN OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE YOUTH FEEL SECURE SO THEY TO FIND THEIR CULTURE AND LEARN SKILLS WITHIN THAT ENVIRONMENT. **THEY NEED A PLACE TO BELONG BECAUSE A LOT OF URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH ARE LOOKING FOR SUCH A PLACE.**"

Whatever their mandate, the timing on this funding freeze couldn't be more unfortunate as there are now summer programs Canada-wide for Aboriginal youth that aren't going to happen.

It isn't just the youth that will be losing out since the preparation for many of these summer programs happened months ago at the beginning of the new fiscal year. Now there will be friendship centres out of pocket for expenditures needed to set up the programs, and many Aboriginal youth left idle without summer jobs.

"If this would have happened months ago, we could have been prepared. The NAFC is quite happy to work on realigning the program with the government, but this is not the smart thing to do. Have an open discussion on how to make it work better. The timing could have been better because now there is a whole bunch of pain out there in the communities and there could be children at risk. These kids could now be out there on the streets," said Cyr.

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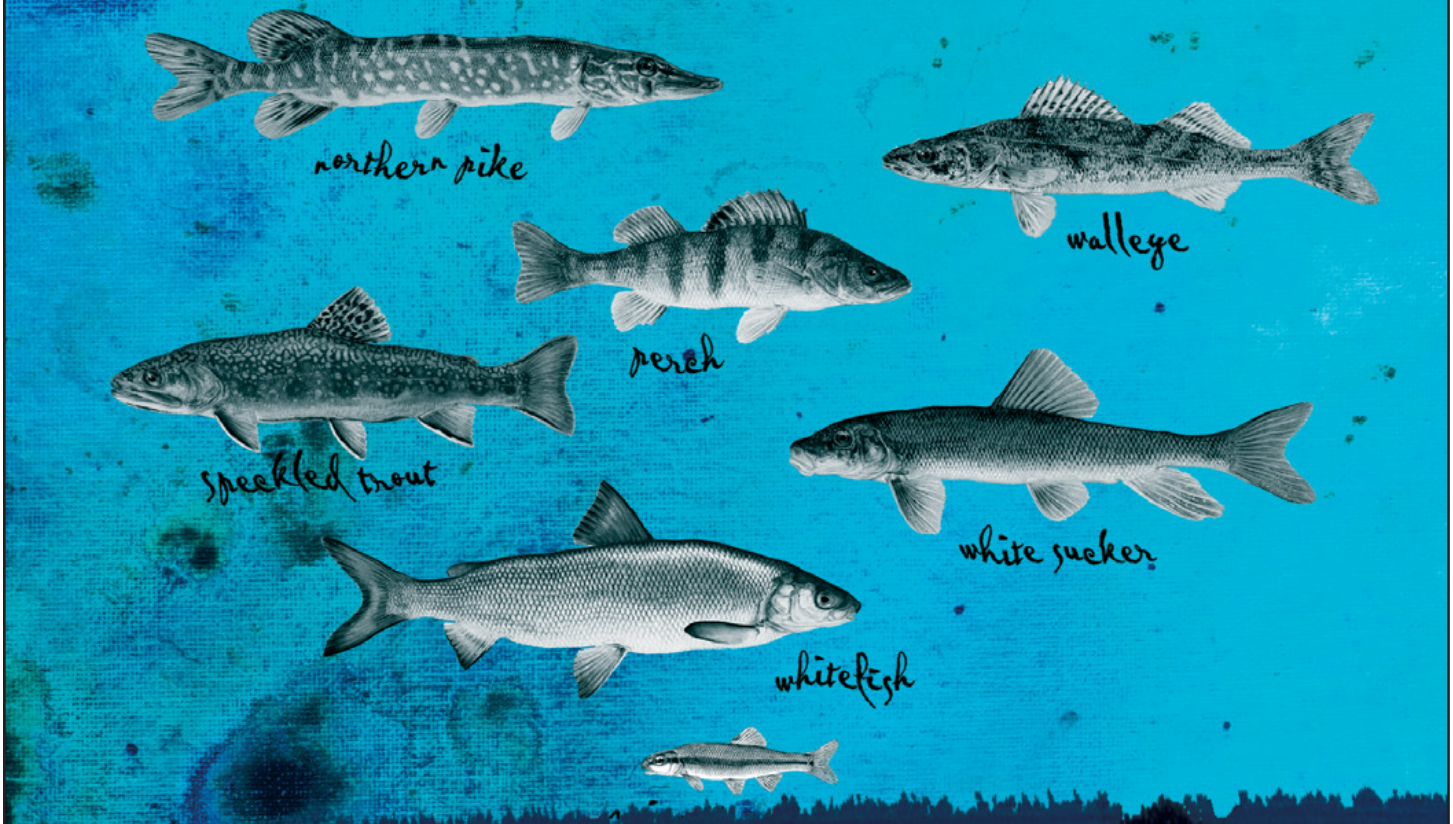

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Children Needing Homes

A long-term foster home is being sought for siblings Nancy, four years old, and her infant brother Seth. Nancy is very active, imaginative and loves to play. She can be quite affectionate, eager to please and loves to be around people. She is in good health and has a good daily routine.

Seth is a delightful bundle of joy; he is smiling, responding well to his environment and is very attentive to voices. He has a good daily routine; he eats well and is beginning to sleep through the night.

The parents of Nancy and Seth are not able to care for them. The siblings are in need of a family who can make the long-term commitment to them for as long as they need. The ideal family would be an Inuit or an Aboriginal family.

A long-term foster home is being sought for Avery, who is a happy, cheerful and rambunctious 21-month-old boy of Aboriginal heritage. He is playful, always smiling and understands a lot through parental interaction and social interactive play with his peers. He is healthy, has a good daily routine, eats well, loves taking his bath, naps during the day and sleeps through the night. The ideal family would be an Ojibway family who can make a commitment to Avery for as long as he needs. Like Avery, there many more children who are in need of foster-care placement.

A long-term foster home is being sought for two-year-old Tom, who was exposed to drugs in utero. Thus far the development of his motor skills is a little delayed. He understands language is speaking in two-word sentences and his progress is being monitored at the Batshaw medical clinic. Tom is feisty and is prepared to battle with anyone who does something that displeases him.

In spite of his situation, Tom is a happy rambunctious two-year-old, who adores being outside in the open air, where running and jumping is a must in his play. He plays well with other children and is also very comfortable playing alone. He is very cautious of strangers and tends to cling to his caregivers whenever he meets people who are not familiar to him. He has a good daily routine – he eats well, has one nap in the afternoon and sleeps through the night. He is not able to dress himself, but is able to take off and put on his shoes.

Tom's parents are unable to take care of him, thus he is in need of a two-parent family who can make a long-term commitment to him for as long as he needs. An Inuit or an Aboriginal family would be ideal.

Jeff is a happy, smiling 10-month-old boy who loves to be cuddled. He is developing age appropriately, is engaging, makes a lot of eye contact and is trying to stand by pulling himself up using the furniture. He plays with his toys by himself, is crawling everywhere and gets into everything if he is not closely watched. He has good daily routine, eats well, is holding his own bottle, naps twice a day and sleeps through the night.

Jeff is in need of a long-term foster family who can make a commitment to him for as long as he needs. An Inuit or an Aboriginal family would be ideal.

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres are in urgent need of Aboriginal and Inuit families who are willing to open their homes as foster parents to meet the placement needs of Aboriginal/Inuit children. In these difficult times, more and more families are feeling unable to take care of their children. As a child protection agency, Batshaw Youth and Family Centres must meet the challenge of this social reality. But we need your help to meet this demand.

> "Over the last two weeks, there has been a great demand for foster homes for young children from newborns to toddlers. The majority of these children are in an emergency foster home waiting for permanent homes of their own. Due to this great demand, our bank of homes has been greatly depleted for toddlers like Tom."

Over the last two weeks, there has been a great demand for foster homes for young children from newborns to toddlers. The majority of these children are in an emergency foster home waiting for permanent homes of their own. Due to this great demand, our bank of homes has been greatly depleted for toddlers like Tom.

For more information about Nancy and Seth, Avery, Tom and lastly Jeff, please call Batshaw Youth and Family Centres at 514-932-7161, ext. 1139.

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Thanks for your help in our time of need!

On Wednesday, May 31, 2012, a building block on 10th avenue in Senneterre was destroyed by a fire that left four Cree Eeyou families homeless. Fortunately, everyone was safe but lost so much in this terrible fire. On behalf of the Wapachee family (Eva, Charlie, Julie and her two children (Reyna and Wawatae), Gabrial Blacksmith and Marina Moore and their three children (Zoe, Shawn and Wyatt) and Catherine Etapp, we would like to say thank you to all the Cree Eeyou communities who offered us their help with huge amounts of donations (furniture, clothing, household items, etc.). It was very much appreciated in a time of need. God bless everyone for their generosity! Megwetch!

NATION CLASSIFIEDS

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Société de développement de la Baie-James
Québec

REOPENING OF RESTAURANT SERVICES AT THE KM 381 SERVICE AREA OF THE JAMES BAY HIGHWAY

Matagami, June 27, 2012 – Restaurant services at the Km 381 service area of the James Bay Highway will be reopening on July 1, 2012. The Société de développement de la Baie-James (SDBJ) would like its customers to take note of the following changes:

· Business hours will be from 7 am to 8 pm.
· Continental breakfast will be available from 7 to 11 am.
· Snack-bar type hot meals with à-la-carte menu will be available from 11 am to 8 pm.
· Convenience store service will once again be available.

Fuel will continue to be available as it is now - 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. There will be no accommodations available to travellers for the time being.

The SDBJ thanks its customers and hopes to resume all its activities as soon as possible. For more information, please visit: http://www.sdbj.gouv.qc.ca

PUBLIC NOTICE

Prenez avis que, **Leslie Duane Whiskeychan**, dont l'adresse du domicile est le 10 Charlton St, Waskaganish, QC, JOM 1R0, a déclaré au Directeur de l'État Civil être **le père de Rhianne Alexis Ella Hester**, née le 10 novembre 2006 à St-Sauveur Hospital de Val-d'Or, QC, **et fille de Patricia Jenny Hester**. En conséquence, le sousigné requiert du Directeur de l'État Civil qu'il inscrive son nom comme père de Rhianne Alexis Ella Hester dans l'acte de naissance de cette dernière et dont le nom de famille sera modifié pour lire comme suit: **Rhianne Alexis Ella (Hester) Whiskeychan**. Prenez en outre avis que toute objection d'un tiers à la présente déclaration doit être notifiée aux déclarants, à l'enfant mineur âgé de quatorze ans ou plus et au Directeur de l'État Civil au plus tard dans les vingt jours de la dernière publication d'un avis de cette déclaration. Avis rempli et signé à Waskaganish, QC le, 20 juin 2012.

UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Surviving a forest fire

by Xavier Kataquapit

It is summer. We are all enjoying those lovely, long, warm summer days. The sun is up early and falls in the sky late at night. Summer birds are back, the chorus of peeping frogs is constant, insects buzz and bite and the fragrance of all kinds of flowers, weeds and grasses fills the air.

The city is a difficult place to be in the summer. So I try to spend most of my time out on the land near lakes and rivers. This summer on my drive through the northern wilderness, I have noticed blacked devastated forests as a result of fires. With the hot summer come the perfect conditions for forest fires. Many are caused by natural occurrences such as lightning, however we humans also play a role.

Forest fires are costly. Fires can ravage thousands of acres of beautiful forestland. This destroys habitat for birds and animals, not to mention we humans. These fires also kill many of the forest creatures and sometimes people.

I learned something about forest fires recently in a conversation with Chief Walter Naveau of Mattagami First Nation. His community had to be evacuated because of a threat of a huge fire that burned in the Timmins area in May. I was alarmed to find out that the fire came as close as four kilometres from the community and that Mattagami was saved only because the wind shifted in direction.

Chief Naveau and his band council stayed behind while the community was evacuated mostly to Kapuskasing, Ontario. Then suddenly things took a turn for the worse and he and his council members were evacuated the following day amid hellish circumstances. He told me how much fear everyone felt as they drove through heavy thick smoke that blotted out the sun but shimmered with the orange blaze of an oncoming fire. He made me realize just how fragile we are next to the power of nature.

Chief Naveau also made me aware of just how strong and capable a community can be. He pointed to the success of the evacuation as a result of the community leadership, Elders and members working together. He noted that a forward-thinking establishment of an emergency response plan really helped the community. He had words of thanks for Wabun Tribal Council and all its staff, Emergency Services, Ministry of Natural Resources, Nishnawbe-Aski Police Services (NAPS), the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and all the courageous firefighters. He told me that Mattagami First Nation would be forever grateful to the Town of Kapuskasing and its leadership for hosting the evacuees.

The awesome power of a major forest fire can only be known through experiencing it. Through Chief Naveau I got a second-hand look at just how frightening such a fire can be and how helpless people can feel when it hits. He also made me realize that emergency-response planning is something we should be grateful for because it saves lives.

I think that many of the people of Mattagami First Nation and including Chief Naveau feared that the entire community was going to be wiped out by this fire. It was such an enormous blaze that if the wind had not changed direction, the community might have been levelled despite all work of the firefighters. Chief Naveau was very emotional as he recalled how grateful everyone was that the children had a school to go back to, the Elders had their homes and everyone could return to life again in Mattagami.

I also discovered from him that the experience had affected the entire community from an emotional standpoint. Even when people were back and safe again in the community, many were still out of sorts for a time. I know it was a traumatic time for many but thanks to great leadership from Chief Naveau and his council, a healthy collection of Elders and a strong community membership, Mattagami First Nation has survived perhaps its greatest challenge ever.

I have a lot of respect for the power of Mother Nature after hearing Chief Naveau's story. It also makes me think that it is necessary to keep reminding people to take care with fire in the forest. Global warming is bringing us some erratic weather and as a result there are times when the forest is very dry. Be aware of the forest conditions before you even start a fire. Don't even think about it if it is very dry. When you do start any fire, make sure you put it out properly and never leave a fire unattended. Drown the last embers in plenty of water. Don't ever throw a lit cigarette or cigar out a moving vehicle and be careful when discarding them on the land.

Have a great summer and don't be the one who lets a fire get away.

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHDAYS

Il'd like to wish a happy birthday to my little sister Leona Mary-Jane Baribeau. She will be 16 years old on July 31st. I love you so much incheem, you are my best friend! I hope you have a great day. I also want to say happy belated birthday to my favorite uncle Andy, from the awesome Jolene Baribeau :)

I would like to wish happy birthday to the best sister in the world: Nian Matoush on July 13th. A hard working mom of two, I hope you take some time for you! Love, your sister Jed.

Happy 30th birthday to my favorite sister Eileen Colette on July 11th, 2012. I know you will enjoy your day! From your big sister Minnie Longchap

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Happy (belated) Father's Day to the father of my many children :) Charlie Matoush! From all your children and your wife Deborah! Also, happy 1st Father's Day to our grandson Hayden's father, Paul Coon, from the gang at 18 Bedabin Street, Mistissini. We love you both so much!

EVENTS / RESOURCES

Art Workshops for Youth: If you are between the ages of 15 and 29 you are invited to develop your creativity in weekly stone carving workshops being conducted at the Inter-Tribal Youth Centre located at 2001 boul. St. Laurent corner Ontario street (downstairs in the building of the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal). Workshops are every Thursday from 3pm to 6pm. For further information call 514-499-1854.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Where to get help: bilingual, anonymous, confidential and free phone services, 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Kid's Help Phone Line: 1-800-668-6868 (www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth Helpline: 1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parents' Helpline: 1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Missing Children's Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared. 514-843-4333 (www.enfant-retourquebec.ca)

Drug Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence: 1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality Resources Center: 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688 (www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec: 1-866-277-3553 (www.suicide-quebec.net/)

Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources

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THE CHALLENGE

In this key executive position, you will not only ensure the Caisse's global, strategic and operational management, but also authorize credit to community members and provide appropriate credit management. You will have several duties in various fields of management: inform, guide and support the board of Directors in its decision-making process and in defining the Caisses's strategic direction, as well as oversee, manage and empower employees while promotingtheir development and skills upgrade. In terms of ensuring the Caisse's profitability, you will monitor performance indicators and implement any required corrective measures. In your capacity as member of the managerial staff, you will lead personal and corporate business market development efforts. You will also contribute, through your active presence at community and local organization events, in maintaining and enhancing the Caisse's reputation, visibility, and market position. Finally, one of your major duties will consist in securing partnerships with community organizations or other organizations involved in social economy. You will therefore spearhead and implement initiatives providing financial education to community members.

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